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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 003927

SIPDIS

PM FOR DAS SUCHAN, JCS FOR BG REMINGTON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/08/2014

TAGS: PREL PHUM PARM IT EUN

SUBJECT: EU GAERC - ITALY CONFIRMS MINISTERS WILL ENDORSE DECISION TO LIFT LIBYA ARMS EMBARGO; WILL DISCUSS US CONCERNS OVER CHINA ARMS EMBARGO

REF: STATE 214023

Classified By: POL MINISTER COUNSELOR TOM COUNTRYMAN. REASON:1.5 (B)(D)

Libya

11. (C) MFA Director for EU CFSP Luigi Mattiolo confirmed to Poloff that EU Ministers would endorse the COREPER decision to lift completely the ban on arms exports to Libya at the October 11 GAERC. Mattiolo underlined that this would not mean a rush of sales of lethal weapons to Tripoli. There will be a period of some weeks between the endorsement and formal removal of the embargo, during which the Commission will prepare documentation for Member State approval. He also stressed that even after the embargo is lifted, States would be constrained in the types and quantities of weapons sales to Libya by the EU Code of Conduct. Mattiolo noted that Italy itself has some of the strictest legislation in the EU relating to arms exports, and, given Libya's proximity, it is certainly in Italy's interests to monitor closely the types of weapons purchased by the regime in Tripoli.

China

12. (C) According to Mattiolo, PM DAS Suchan and JCS BG Remington "left quite an impression" in the wake of their visits this week to certain EU capitals, including Rome, to explain US concerns over lifting the EU's China arms embargo. Mattiolo said that those concerns, among other issues, will be discussed by Ministers at the GAERC, but "there is no rush, and no way the Ministers will decide on October 11" to lift the embargo. Mattiolo repeated the position he used with Suchan and Remington: Italy supports, but is not out in front pushing for, lifting the embargo, and US concerns on strategic issues would be satisfied by the Code of Conduct. According to Mattiolo, Italy will push for a review of the code, and to include the US in discussions on how it can be modified to more effectively prevent delivery to China of weapons systems that could put US or EU troops at risk. Note: We will report details of Suchan/Remington's Rome meetings septel. Subsequent to the visit, Embassy Office of Defense Cooperation chief was contacted by the dip advisor to the Ministry of Productive Activities with an offer to consult on the Code of Conduct. Poloff will seek more detail on the advisor's agenda for the meeting and seek Department's guidance before proceeding.

Sudan

13. (C) Mattiolo reported that he has been working with the MOD Chief of Staff to identify an Italian officer to join the British, German (EU Staff), Swedish, French and American military advisors at the African Union's planning cell in Addis Ababa. Ministers may also discuss deployment of an EU police training team to the region.

SEMBLER

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